



Luxury in a compact form

Half-time: MG saloons are generally overshadowed by the legendary sports cars wearing the octagonal badge. All the more reason for restoring a rare **Y-Type**

With its tall radiator, separately mounted headlamps and front wings flowing into the running boards, the luxuriously appointed Y-Type clearly has its roots in the 1930s – not the only feature it shares with its more spartan siblings, the T-Type Midgets. We met an enthusiast who has succumbed to the charm of the little classic saloon.

No more than twenty examples of the Y-Type are known within the German club scene; even in its native country, it is a rare car. To many MG enthusiasts, it forms the natural complement to their sports car, offering room for the family and more creature comforts – a notion that is hand-somely confirmed by a glance at Walter Prechsl's garage-cum-

workshop, where his Y-Type is parked alongside an MGA. We visited Walter at his home in Obersulm, about 30 miles north of Stuttgart, on the occasion of the party he gave to celebrate the Y-Type's restoration. Predictably, it doesn't take long for the owner to out himself as a dyed-in-the-wool devotee of the octagon. "It all began many years ago with a TC," the sixty-eight year-old enthusiast recounts. "This was joined by an MGA as our family grew, and we made many trips in style with our two daughters. One day, we were at a club event in England when a family arrived in their Y-Type and produced an amazing amount of luggage from the tiny-looking car, including a folding table, chairs and comprehensive camping equipment. My wife Ursula was particularly smitten with the handsome saloon."

> TECHNICAL DATA

MG YA/YB

Production: 1947-53
6,158 (YA), 1,301 (YB), 877 (YT)

Engine: Water-cooled, in-line four, ohv, three-bearing crankshaft, one SU H2 carburettor

Capacity: 1,250 cc, bore x stroke 66.5 x 90 mm

Output: 46 bhp @ 4,800 rpm
Max. torque: 58.5 lbs. ft. @ 2,400 rpm

Dimensions: 13'5" x 4'10" x 4'9" L/W/H
Weight (dry): 19.5 cwt

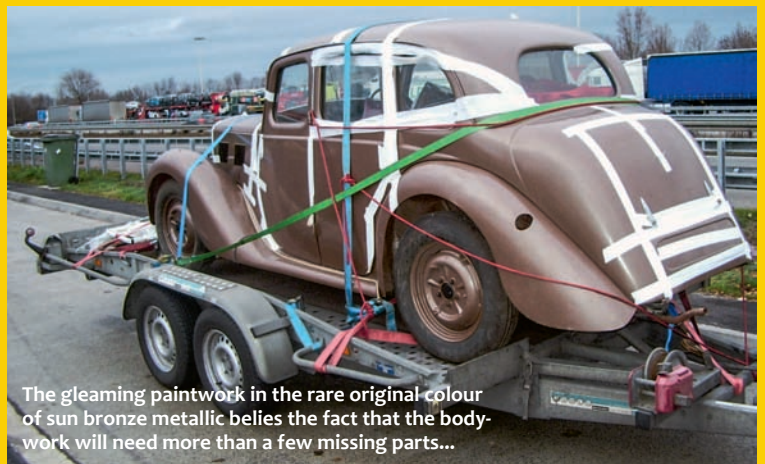
Performance: 70 mph, 0-60 mph in 29 secs (The Motor, 1951)

Hardly surprising in view of the car's inviting interior that would not disgrace a considerably more expensive luxury saloon. Furnished in traditional British style, it features an abundance of polished walnut and leather. Deep pile carpets cover the floor. Not a square inch of sheet metal is visible. There are separate seats in front and a central folding armrest for the occupants of the rear bench, with additional armrests either side and a rear window blind. An ashtray is provided for each passenger; should the interior become too stuffy, the driver can always open the wind-screen or the standard sunroof... All in all, the little saloon offered a touch of class that set it apart from other Tens in the late Forties.

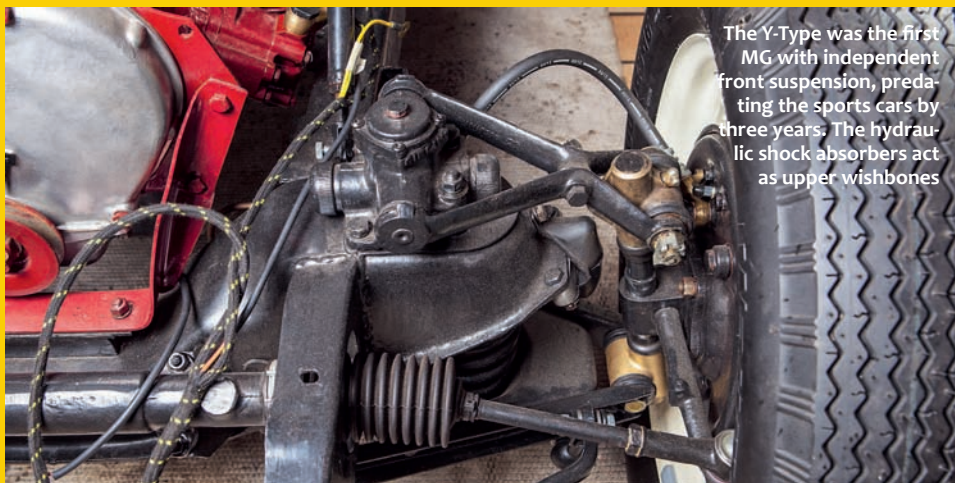
The Y-Type was to remain on Walter's wish list for many years;



The car's first outing after 30 years in a damp garage. The „English patient“ is loaded onto Walter's trailer



The gleaming paintwork in the rare original colour of sun bronze metallic belies the fact that the bodywork will need more than a few missing parts...



The Y-Type was the first MG with independent front suspension, predating the sports cars by three years. The hydraulic shock absorbers act as upper wishbones

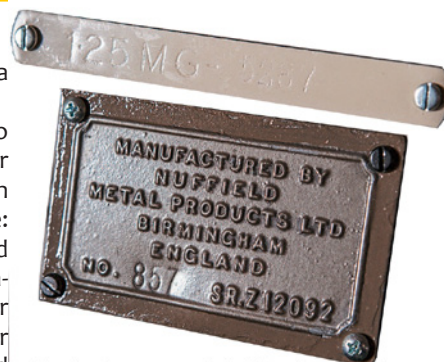


Air conditioning, pre-war style: The windscreen can be cracked open by pulling a chain - and for those wind-in-the-hair types, there's always the sunroof...

in 2011, he finally found a suitable car in the North London area. An abandoned restoration, the 1951 YA had been purchased by its previous owner in 1978. He had dismantled it, started the rebuild but apparently lost interest after three years. The poor car was parked in a damp, open garage, where it was left for the next three decades – with dire consequences: even the renewed paintwork was bubbling, the body looked particularly bad underneath, while the interior - or

what was left of it - was in a sorry state.

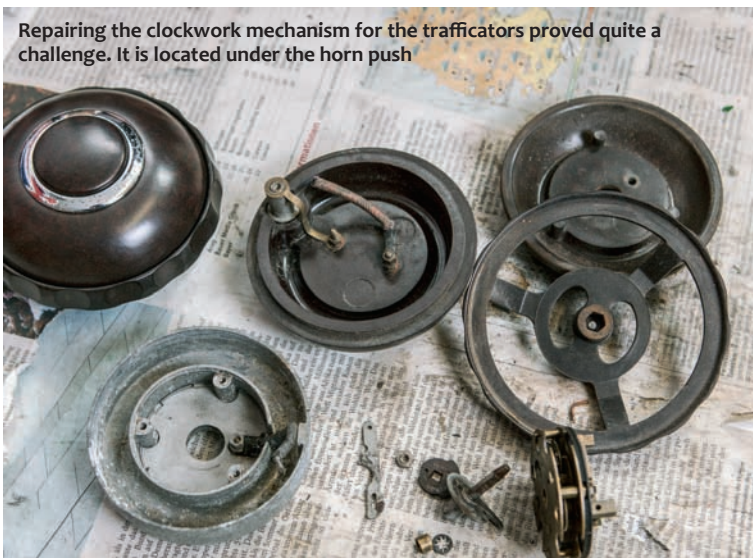
But Walter is not a man to be easily discouraged. After all, a TC and MGA owner is on home territory with a Y-Type: lifting the centrally-hinged bonnet panels reveals a familiar sight. The XPAG four (cf. "Sectioned" in Oldtimer Praxis 7/2018) is to be found not only in the TC, but also in the short-lived pre-war TB, the TD and – initially – the TF. Originally installed in the Morris Ten and bo-



The body was made in Birmingham in one of the many Nuffield Group factories. MG was also part of William Morris' empire (he had been made Lord Nuffield in 1934)

red out to 1,250 cc, the engine has to make do with a single carburettor in its saloon application; power duly dropped from 54 to 46 hp. However, Walter maintains it is quite easy – and not uncommon – to convert the Y-Type to twin carbs to improve performance. This was achieved using a TD induction manifold and air filters. The pushrod engine is a long-stroke unit in the traditional British idiom, yet

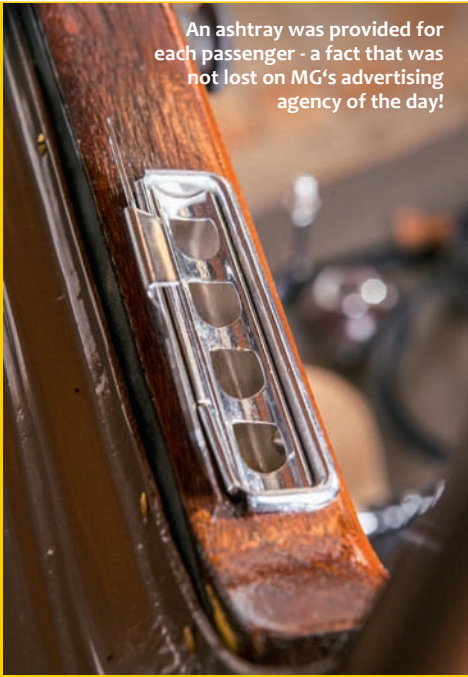
Repairing the clockwork mechanism for the trafficators proved quite a challenge. It is located under the horn push



> DATES & FACTS

With its luxurious equipment, advanced suspension and good turn of speed for its day, the Y-Type promised to be a formidable contender in the small saloon car market. Sadly its launch, scheduled for the 1940 Motor Show, had to be postponed by seven years due to the hostilities, by which time the car was looking rather old-fashioned - with the exception of its independent front suspension, the work of a young Morris engineer by the name of Alec Issigonis and his colleague Jack Daniels. This would continue to do sterling service in various MG models until the end of MGB production in 1980! Rack and pinion steering was another first for the Nuffield Group, which also encompassed the Morris, Riley and Wolseley marques. Otherwise, the Y-Type shared many components with other cars from the Group, most notably the Morris Eight bodyshell and the Morris Ten's engine - the result of a rationalisation process which had begun with the SVW range. A total of 6,158 YA saloons were produced between 1947 and 1951, followed by 1,301 YBs, which featured many improvements such as the new Lockheed twin leading shoe brakes, a more modern hypoid rear axle and front anti-roll bar. Sales of a four-seat open tourer, the YT, proved disappointing; only 877 were built between 1948 and 1950.

An ashtray was provided for each passenger - a fact that was not lost on MG's advertising agency of the day!



Inviting interior boasts an abundance of polished walnut, leather and chrome. Note the octagonal bezels for the instruments

is quite happy to rev and offers plenty in reserve.

But at the onset of the restoration, tuning remained a pipedream: a life-saving operation was what was needed now. Removal of the the rocker cover revealed a horrific mass of ferrous oxyde, and the red devil had spread to the lower storeys as well. "The clutch was covered in fungus and lichen, which had literally welded the parts together," Walter recalls. He finally had to use brute force to separate the components.

There was nothing for it but to dismantle the engine, which – ironically – the previous owner had refurbished, and start from scratch. First, all components went into a dip of citric acid to remove the rust. Fortunately, reassembly was relatively straightforward; the cylinders only needed honing and, with the help of a fair amount of oil, the engine duly returned to its former glory.

The remainder of the car, alas, turned out to be a nut-and-bolt restoration as well. Walter dis-

"The car had been restored, but sitting in a damp garage for thirty years undid all the work of the previous owner."

Walter Prechsl

mantled the entire body. The pre-war design - the specification of the "MG Ten" was finalised in the late Thirties – turned out to be quite a boon. The body rests on a massive box-section chassis; it is easily separated from the frame, allowing good access. While contemporary T-Type roadsters had an ash frame with metal panels, the Y-Type body is a welded, all-steel construction, onto which the wings are bolted. Only the floor boards are wooden, they extend from the rear seat all the

> From the restoration album

Strong and stable: The chassis consists of two box-section side rails and three tubular cross-members. A panhard rod provides lateral location for the leaf-sprung rear axle



Cottage industry: Walter made the arm rests in the rear panels himself, Ursula sewed the pvc covers. Work on the cylinder head was equally meticulous



From left to right: The engine had been restored, but after thirty years of being exposed to the elements, the previous owner's work had been undone. The body is lifted off the chassis – a nut-and-bolt restoration begins. The two parts of the clutch could only be separated by brute force. „With a little help from my friends“ - Walter's ingenious device for cleaning the tank.



The four rams of the Jackall hydraulic jack are activated by a pump on the bulkhead



Most of the interior trim was missing. Walter cuts reinforced cardboard to measure

way to the bulkhead. The two halves of the long, hinged bonnet open upwards, along with the side panels.

Walter raised the body three feet off the ground, rolled the chassis out of the way and made himself comfortable under the car for the next few weeks, an arsenal of revolving wire brushes, rust remover, paint pots and various other agents by his side. After the body, the chassis was repainted, as were the other refurbished attaching parts. For the restoration of the rusty fuel tank, Walter's brother-in-law came to the rescue with his tractor. The tank was filled with sharp-edged rubble, attached to the jacked-up rear wheel of the agricultural machine and rotated for the next two hours!

"As you'd expect from a car from this era, the Y-Type is quite simple mechanically and doesn't hold any major surprises," Walter sums up the remaining tasks. It was seemingly minor issues that were to prove tricky, such as the intricate clockwork mechanism for the trafficator switch, which is located under the horn push. In the end, Walter had to buy three used items, whose working parts he cannibalised to make one functioning switch. "Y-Type owners are less fortunate than the owners of post-war MG sports cars when it comes to spare parts," Walter says. „On the whole, components unique to the Y can only be sourced from UK specialists, at a premium. Fortunately, there's a



Portrait of the owner

> **Walter Prechsl** (68) is a dyed-in-the-wool MG enthusiast and DIY mechanic of many years' experience. He enjoys all aspects of his hobby, be it meeting fellow enthusiasts at UK events or keeping in touch with the worldwide MG community. In the late nineties, he founded an internet platform for fans of the classic T-Type, www.MG-tabc.org.

really nice Y-community, whose members inform each other whenever a car is broken for spares."

The restoration of the interior proved to be quite a challenge. As most of the trim panels were missing and therefore could not be used as patterns, new items had to be made, Walter often resorting to photographs as a reference. Originally made of fabric with a cardboard backing, the panels tend to split with age. "I reinforced the critical points I had seen on reference cars with veneer," Walter explains. "The inner surface was given a coat of wood lacquer to protect it against moisture. I decided to make the four door cards from thin plywood, which is stronger and less prone to damp than cardboard, though curves are more difficult to shape."

The roof lining will be Walter's next challenge. "Wooden strips form the structure; these are attached to the sheet metal with screws. The six cloth segments are stapled on - a daunting task I'm just dreading! We've decided to do a mock-up with cheap felt first, just to be on the safe side." Fortunately, Ursula is a talented seamstress; she can't wait to take the car out on its first tour, with all the family's paraphernalia on board, savouring the creature comforts of this small but delightful classic.

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The valves are adjusted before the engine bursts into life again after thirty years